

POPULATION CONNECTION



Volume 54, Issue 3
September 2022

**INDIA TO BECOME MOST
POPULOUS COUNTRY
SOON AFTER WORLD
HITS 8 BILLION PEOPLE**



President's Note

Graduating from college armed with a degree in political science, I improbably decided to become a carpenter. My responses to help wanted ads went unanswered to the point where I imagined local contractors chuckling over their morning coffee at my hapless entreaties. Finally, I got a job with an outfit that specialized in hiring inept workers at low wages. Once, while placing sloppy finishing touches on a home, our foreman, Tony, remarked, "Well, you can't see it from my house."

A big part of the problem in today's complex, interconnected world is that none of us are capable of seeing all of it from wherever we live. We tend to cherry-pick the parts that fit into our favored narrative. Alas, wishful thinking rarely leads to wish fulfillment, so we must try to see things as they are.

The most recent UN population estimates and projections—released on World Population Day (July 11)—will lead to claims by some that the era of rapid population growth is nearly over. It isn't. In fact, it only took a dozen years to add the most recent billion people to our planet—we are projected to hit 8 billion on November 15. We're now also projected to peak at 10.4 billion people in the 2080s—a projection that assumes significant fertility declines in high-fertility countries in the next few decades.

We are depleting resources at an alarming rate. As for those who argue that the problem is our lifestyle, rather than our numbers, that's cold comfort for the roughly 1 million species now threatened with extinction.

Why do some environmental groups that approvingly cite eventual population stabilization get their hackles up when the topic of overpopulation is raised? If they view an end to population growth as a positive development, then surely it must be due to some concern about overpopulation. And, if they don't believe, as we do, that the world is already overpopulated at 8 billion people, then do they think a world of 10.4 billion, or more, is likely to be sustainable?

Asked about overpopulation, many in the United States change the subject and talk about inequitable distribution of resources and our high fossil fuel emissions. Of course, they're right as far as that goes, but there is much more to the story.

Many leaders in the Global South speak forthrightly about overpopulation. It's too immediate a threat where they live to hide behind euphemisms. By contrast, the general silence on the part of most U.S. environmental groups is truly puzzling, given the good work they do on so many fronts.

Access to high-quality voluntary family planning results in smaller families, which leads to slower population growth. Given the nearly endless litany of human and natural disasters, couldn't we all be better off if there were fewer of us? Let's smash the barriers that now prevent so many people from having fewer children and better lives. A safer, less-crowded world is possible, but only if we speak clearly and act boldly.

John Seager
john@popconnect.org

A longtime stalwart member of Population Connection—joining back in our ZPG days—Guy Stoye, 89, died recently. Guy loved the natural world unreservedly—birds, bats, bees, even those pesky wasps! Several years ago, I was privileged to have lunch with him and his wife, Ann, at their home on the shore of Danbury Bog in New Hampshire. The word "palace" conjures up images of a vast turreted edifice. Their home was a different sort of palace, remarkable not by size or design but rather location in the midst of nature. A man of many interests, Guy's obituary in *The Laconia Daily Sun* noted that he "achieved greatness in his own way, one small act of grace at a time." We are honored to have been included in his estate plans.

Board Chair

Estelle Raboni, MPH, MCHES

Board of Directors

Aaron S. Allen, PhD

Rodrigo Barillas, MD, MBA (Secretary)

Amy Dickson, MPH

Katie Ferman, MNA

Bryce Hach, MS (Vice Chair)

Mark Hathaway, MD, MPH

Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, BVetMed, MsPVM

Melvine Ouyo, BScN, MPA, MPH

Bob Pettapiece, EdD (Treasurer)

Seema Mohapatra, JD, MPH

Mary Beth Weinberger, MA

Kevin Whaley, PhD

President and CEO

John Seager

john@popconnect.org

Editor

Marian Starkey, MSc

marian@popconnect.org

Population Connection (ISSN 2331-0529)

Population Connection is the national grassroots population organization that educates young people and advocates progressive action to stabilize world population at a level that can be sustained by earth's resources.

Annual membership (\$25) includes a one-year subscription to *Population Connection* magazine, published quarterly. Population Connection is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. As such, contributions, bequests, and gifts are fully tax-deductible in accordance with current laws.

Population Connection

2120 L Street, NW, Suite 500

Washington, DC 20037

(202) 332-2200 • (800) 767-1956

info@popconnect.org

populationconnection.org

populationeducation.org

Features

12 New United Nations Population Estimates and Projections

By Mary Beth Weinberger

18 India Projected to Become World's Most Populous Country Next Year

By Hannah Evans



Cover image: People shop at a crowded marketplace on the eve of World Population Day 2022 in New Delhi, India. World Population Day is an annual event, observed on July 11, which seeks to raise awareness of global population issues. (Photo by Amarjeet Kumar Singh/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

Departments

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 Editor's Note | 26 Washington View |
| 3 Letters to the Editor | 28 Field & Outreach |
| 4 Pop Facts | 30 PopEd |
| 6 In the News | 32 Cartoon |
| 8 Summer Photo Contest Winners | 33 Editorial Excerpts |
| 10 Member Spotlight: Chris Ennis | |



Editor's Note

Fellow demography nerds, rejoice! The United Nations Population Division released its long-awaited *World Population Prospects 2022* on World Population Day (July 11). These updated estimates and projections are typically published every two years, but Covid-19 caused delays in data collection that pushed publication back by a year. The new data was worth the wait, however, as there are some big reveals in this revision:

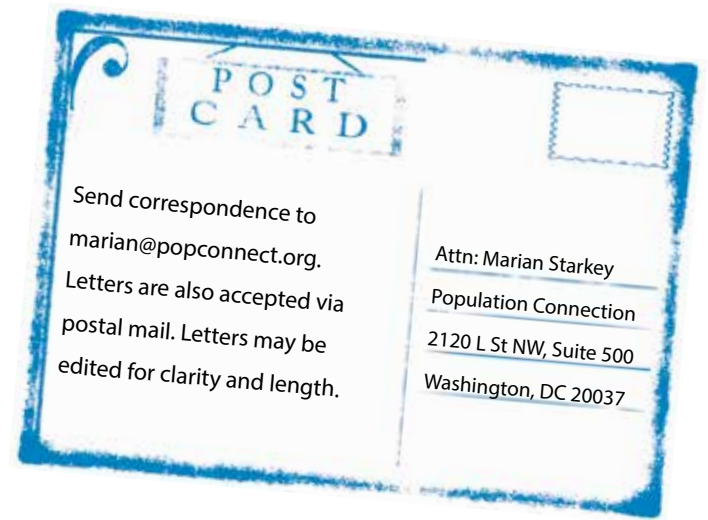
- The world population is projected to cross 8 billion on November 15, 2022.
- At the time, the 7 billion population milestone was marked on October 31, 2011, but the new estimates show that we reached 7 billion in 2010. Previous milestones were revised to earlier dates as well.
- The 2050 medium population projection is the same as it was in the 2019 data revision—9.7 billion—but the longer range projection has been revised downward. In 2019, the projection for 2100 was 10.9 billion. In the 2022 revision, the population is projected to peak at 10.4 billion in the 2080s, where it will remain until the end of the century.
- The world population on July 1, 2021, was 34.3 million higher than the 2019 revision projected it would be on that date (7,909.3 million vs. 7,875.0 million).
- The global population is growing at the slowest rate since 1950. (If this seems counterintuitive, given that we're still adding a billion people every 12 years, consider the massive base upon which that lower growth rate is compounding.)
- China is projected to begin shrinking as early as next year, when India will surpass it as the world's most populous country. India is projected to continue growing until the 2060s.
- Two-thirds of people on earth live in countries with below-replacement-rate fertility.
- Half of the projected population growth between now and 2050 will occur in sub-Saharan Africa.

As the UN Population Division writes in its key messages, “Rapid population growth is both a cause and a consequence of slow progress in development.” Indeed, rapid population growth causes slow progress in development by making it impossible for governments to adequately address the needs of populations that are doubling every two to three decades. And, of course, rapid population growth is a consequence of slow progress in development related to education, employment, and health.

Family planning has, for decades, been a crucial component of sustainable development projects and programs. Why, then, don't we fund it at the level necessary to eliminate all unmet need? The U.S. is under-funding international family planning by more than a billion dollars a year, and despite proposed increases by House and Senate appropriations leaders (see Washington View on page 26), neither chamber is proposing investments anywhere near where they need to be to ensure that everyone who wants to use modern contraception can do so. We must do better. There are 8 billion people on the planet who depend on it.

Marian Starkey
marian@popconnect.org

Letters to the Editor



As a woman now in her 60s, I look back and reflect on my life and the choices I have made. The biggest choice was whether or not to have children.

At the age of 25, I made the conscious decision not to, and every day I am grateful I had the help and support I needed. I feel that, as a society, we have a moral and spiritual urgency to speak out about the issues surrounding overpopulation, to help break down the stigmas and taboos that still keep this too much in the shadows. Our individual and collective efforts are all a precious gift to Mother Earth.

Maria Pinto

World food production is increasing, but is losing ground in the race with hunger. In nature, every species in a favorable environment grows until its death rate matches its birth rate. The human species is the first to intellectually understand environmental carrying capacity—we are the first to have a choice. We can choose a birth rate solution rather than a death rate solution as our population nears its carrying capacity.

Of course, the earth's human carrying capacity is changing due to changing technology. Yet nature is signaling that we are getting close to limits and that we are reducing the carrying capacity of the earth for non-human life. I fear the human population will continue to grow until nature imposes death rate solutions on us and our growth leads to the extinction of many other species. By contrast, the birth rate solution could lead to a healthy and well-fed human population in harmony and balance with the rest of our natural world. Why is this alternative not part of stories about hunger and climate change?

Robert W. Easton

That your organization has an important, lifesaving purpose I have no doubt. Unfortunately, there is an entire world system that doesn't want you to succeed. Leaders want larger bases, corporations want more consumers, religions want more church members, etc. I doubt there are more than a few, if any, large entities that rely on people that would like to see populations shrink. I base that on the fact that virtually no large-scale and influential body is picking up the mantra. None of this or any country's political leaders seem to want to promote it vigorously and openly. Never see anything on the mainstream media. I am of the belief that unless we can get this idea first and foremost on the minds of every person on this planet, achieving your goals in a meaningful and lasting way cannot occur. I donate to your organization, but I'm not hopeful.

David Brothers

Regarding our response to the Jerusalem Demsas article "The People Who Hate People," published in The Atlantic in May:

Being concerned about the carrying capacity of the earth and the compromises and changes required due to increases in population does not make either a person or an organization revisionist, conservative, anti-reform, or anti-progress. It marks them as thoughtful and concerned, interested in facts rather than unsupported emotional suppositions.

We can all argue about who should occupy which berths on the Titanic, but not about going full speed ahead into a rapidly developing iceberg field.

James Pearce

WORLD POPULATION HITS **8 billion**

NOVEMBER

15

The world's population is projected to reach
8 billion on Nov 15, 2022

The latest projections by the United Nations suggest that the world's population could grow to around

8.5 billion in 2030

9.7 billion in 2050

It is projected to reach a peak of around

10.4 billion in the 2080s

and to remain at that level until 2100.

India

is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country in 2023.

China

is expected to experience an absolute decline in its population as early as 2023.



2020

the growth rate of the global population fell under 1 percent per year for the first time since 1950.

2021

the average fertility of the world's population stood at 2.3 births per woman over a lifetime, having fallen from about 5 births per woman in 1950.

2022–2050

The 46 least developed countries (LDCs) are among the world's fastest-growing. Many are projected to double in population between 2022 and 2050, putting additional pressure on resources and posing challenges to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



In 2021, about 13.3 million babies—or 10 percent of the global number of births—were born to young mothers under the age of 20 worldwide, half of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

Between 2022 and 2050, the population of sub-Saharan Africa is expected to almost double, surpassing 2 billion inhabitants by the late 2040s.

Globally, the under-five mortality rate fell from 92.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 37.1 in 2021. Still, a child born in sub-Saharan Africa in 2021 is 20 times as likely to die before his or her fifth birthday as a child born in Australia and New Zealand.



IN THE NEWS

By Olivia Nater, Communications Manager

U.S. Birth Rate Up Again, but Aging Trend Remains

According to preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there were 3,659,289 births in 2021, an increase of about 46,000, or 1 percent, from 2020. The CDC's analysis found that during the initial Covid-19 lockdowns in the spring of 2020, there was a sharp decline in conceptions that led to fewer births. But conceptions began increasing again by the summer of 2020 as unemployment decreased and families received government benefits.

Nevertheless, the birth rate in 2021 was still lower than in 2019, reflecting an ongoing trend towards smaller families. The declining U.S. birth rate is leading to population aging—new Census data shows that since 2000, the national median age has increased by 3.4 years to 38.8. The Northeast was the oldest region in 2021, with a median age of 40.4, followed by the Midwest (39.0), the South (38.6), and the West (37.7). The Census data also revealed that the country is becoming more diverse, with all race and ethnicity groups growing between 2020 and 2021 except for the white population, which declined by 0.03 percent.

Pandemic disruptions affected the quality of the 2020 Census, with research published in May this year showing household populations were overcounted in eight states (Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Utah), yet undercounted in six others (Arkansas,

Florida, Illinois, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas). However, the Census Bureau concluded that the national total in the 2020 Census was largely accurate. Overall, the U.S. population increased from 331,501,080 on July 1, 2020, to 331,893,745 on July 1, 2021.

Increase in Vasectomies Post-Roe and a Prospective Over-the-Counter Pill

The Supreme Court's devastating decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* seems to have prompted many men to seek out a vasectomy. Florida urologist Dr. Doug Stein told *The Washington Post* that since the Court's decision, the number of vasectomy requests he receives daily has increased from four or five to 12-18.

In other encouraging contraceptive news, HRA Pharma, a French company, has submitted an application to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the first over-the-counter contraceptive pill in the U.S. Opill is a "mini pill," a type of pill that contains only progestin. Unlike combination pills that also contain estrogen, progestin-only pills do not increase the risk of high blood pressure or cardiovascular disease.

Over 100 countries already allow some contraceptive pills to be sold without a prescription. A 2016 survey of U.S.-based women of childbearing age found that almost 30 percent have had difficulty obtaining birth control prescriptions or refills. An over-the-counter pill—as long as it's affordably priced—would help make birth control more accessible across the country, especially

for marginalized communities. The FDA is expected to make a decision in 2023.

Supreme Court Ruling Sets Back Climate Action

The Supreme Court's ruling in *West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)* on June 30 represents a blow to the EPA's ability to take meaningful climate action. The conservative 6-3 majority ruled that the EPA cannot set state-level emissions caps for power plants. The power sector is the second-largest source of carbon emissions in the U.S., after transportation.

The Court stated that federal agencies require explicit authorization from Congress to decide on issues "of major economic and political significance," raising concerns that the ruling could also hamper other much-needed environmental measures.

Report: We Must "Redefine Humanity's Relationship With Nature"

It's been 50 years since the seminal United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference) in 1972, the UN's first international conference dedicated to environmental issues. The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW) published a new report to provide a scientific basis for the Stockholm+50 follow-up conference held in early June 2022.

The report provides yet another urgent call to transform our relationship with

nature in order to tackle the interlinked planetary and social crises. Its key recommendations include greening cities; facilitating sustainable lifestyles; improving animal welfare alongside a global shift to plant-based diets; nature-based education campaigns for children; and replacing GDP with sustainability and well-being indicators. The report also calls on policymakers to draw on the knowledge of Indigenous communities.

Climate Change Causes Deadly Record Heatwaves and Floods

Temperatures across Europe, from Spain to the British Isles, soared this summer, causing record-breaking droughts and fires. The United Kingdom declared a national emergency when parts of its runways melted in the heatwave, while Portugal recorded more than 1,000 deaths due to extreme temperatures. French authorities battled wildfires and implemented water use restrictions as more than 100 municipalities ran out of drinking water and required water truck supplies.

Brutal heatwaves also hit India earlier this year, with temperatures reaching 100-year records. Aside from the direct threat to human lives and livelihoods, heatwaves have been estimated to cost India's economy 101 billion hours of lost labor annually due to outdoor work, such as agriculture and construction, becoming increasingly unmanageable.

Deadly floods in Bangladesh have left millions of children homeless, hungry, and lacking health care, safe water, and

education. Covid-19 school closures combined with flood impacts have disrupted the education of 37 million children in Bangladesh since the start of the pandemic, according to UNICEF.

In eastern Uganda, at least 30 people were killed by flash flooding, while more than 5,600 have been displaced and 400,000 have been left without clean drinking water. Extreme weather also struck parts of the U.S., with catastrophic flooding in Kentucky claiming 39 lives.

A report published in May by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) revealed that four critical climate records were broken in 2021: atmospheric greenhouse gas levels, sea level rise, ocean warming, and ocean acidification. It also showed that the past seven years have been the warmest seven years on record. In response to the report, UN Secretary-General António Guterres criticized “the dismal litany of humanity’s failure to tackle climate disruption” and renewed his call for a rapid shift away from fossil fuels.

Zero Hunger SDG Moving Out of Reach


A UN report published in July revealed that the number of people suffering from hunger increased by 46 million between 2020 and 2021 and by 150 million between 2019 and 2021. As many as 828 million people, or more than 10 percent of the world’s population, don’t have enough to eat.

Since 2017, world hunger has been increasing again (after steadily declining

for over a decade), with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of ending hunger by 2030 moving ever further out of reach. The report warns of the intensification of three key drivers of hunger and malnutrition: conflict, climate extremes, and economic shocks, including the disruption of supply chains caused by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

One in Six Deaths Due to Pollution

A study published in *The Lancet Planetary Health* in May revealed that environmental pollution causes an estimated 9 million premature deaths annually, with 90 percent of these deaths taking place in low- and middle-income countries. Air pollution accounts for the vast majority of pollution-related deaths, at 6.7 million per year, followed by water pollution at 1.4 million deaths, lead poisoning at 900,000, and occupational pollution from carcinogens and particulate matter at 870,000.

The study found that the total number of pollution-related deaths has not changed in the past five years, but the contributions from different sources have shifted. In 2015, there were more deaths from household air pollution (from stoves that burn solid fuels such as wood) and unsafe water than in 2019. However, 2019 saw an increase in deaths caused by modern forms of pollution resulting from fossil fuel combustion (including from traffic) and toxic chemicals. 

The digital version of this article includes hyperlinked sources: popconnect.org/articles/in-the-news-september-2022/

Summer Photo Contest Winners

By Natalie Widel, Director of Digital Marketing

We're excited to announce the winners of Population Connection's first summer photo contest! Members from around the country submitted photos of the natural spaces, different cultures, and wildlife that inspire them to work for a more sustainable future for our planet. And the winners are...

First Place

Andrew Clark, Pendleton, OR

"This is a photo I really love. It is a Red-crowned Barbet in its nest hole, sleeping. I took the photo during a night hike in the Kalimantan jungle in Borneo. The illumination is with simple flashlights."



Andrew Clark joined Population Connection in 2015 and became a member of our Leadership Circle in 2019.

My wife, Barbara, and I were both Peace Corps volunteers in 1964, and that led to a life of working and traveling internationally. Barbara has lived, worked, or traveled in 64 nations, and I'm at a relatively paltry 37. We're both 81, and I'm still working in Africa, but all remote now.

A veterinarian, Dr. Clark works primarily on infectious diseases in livestock. "Millions of people depend for their livelihoods on livestock trade directly, and then millions

more people depend on the industries of secondary by-products of livestock," he explained.

Currently, I am working with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service to promote this coordination into all 55 nations of Africa, with the final goal of creating stable human livelihoods. Stability is a key to how people view their lives and behave, and the more stable and prosperous they are, the more likely it is that they will be aware of and conscientious about their environment and their capabilities for raising fewer, more healthy children.

In describing how he views Population Connection's work, he says:

People like me are working to stabilize the supply of high-quality protein for development of healthy brains in healthy children and stable livelihoods for their parents. Population Connection supporters can work toward stabilizing the population at lower—much lower—levels. This can be done—we all have a part to play.

If Population Connection supports us all working together toward the same goal of human populations appropriate to the environments and ecologies of their lands, lots of good things can happen, and millions of people will be better off.

Honorable Mentions



Kris Gulden, Fairfax, VA

"This was my first time exploring Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, near Cambridge, MD, in the evening. As luck would have it, the sky was a mix of beautiful colors and cloud formations as the sun was setting. I like the way the colors are reflected on the water, too."

Why population issues matter to Kris:

There are so many dangers posed by overpopulation. We have limited space and limited resources here on earth, and stabilizing the number of people on the planet is critical not only for our survival, but it also influences the quality of life we experience.

Alex Burr, Las Cruces, NM

"I took this photo of an elephant family in Sweetwaters Game Reserve, a large, well populated park in Kenya with a large variety of wildlife."

Why population issues matter to Alex:

It takes a certain amount of land area, food, and other resources to support each person. In some places on earth, there are too many people for a good quality of life and a sustainable future. If population growth is not reduced, the regions that already have too many people will continue to exceed their carrying capacity.



Tom Cameron, Avon, CT

"I've spent hundreds of hours, over many years, on this river (often in my kayak), witnessing its beauty. This was a special morning—my birthday—and the river gave me a present: a doe and her two fawns respectfully requesting passage through a flock of geese feeding in the shallow rapids."

Why population issues matter to Tom:

Our challenge is to recognize our fossil fuel addiction and understand how it has warped our consciousness and exploded our human population at the expense of thousands of other species and brought us to the brink of our own demise.

You can find more of our wonderful photo contest entries on our website, at popconnect.org/photo-contest-2022. Congratulations to our winners, and thanks to all who entered. You inspire us!

Member Spotlight: Chris Ennis

Written by Lee S. Polansky, Senior Director of Executive Initiatives and Special Projects

Interview by Sarah Ikemoto, Development Manager

Chris Ennis joined Population Connection in 1999 and has been a loyal member of our President's Circle since 2016. With a doctorate in math from UC Berkeley, he taught math (of course), physics, and engineering at the college and community college level for the majority of his career. He's now retired and agreed to chat with us about his interest in population issues and his long involvement with ZPG and Population Connection.

Chris grew up in California and lived in Berkeley for most of the 1970s. He earned his undergraduate degree at UCLA, where he met his wife on the first day of college. They got married right after they graduated. Not surprisingly, the two Ennis sons are also very smart; one has a PhD in physics, and the other went to seminary school.

While Chris is retired, he's still very busy. He stays active and runs every day, saying that running "keeps me flexible and keeps my energy level up." He stays current with his field, researching mathematical problems in geometric probability, and has published several of his findings. He also does carpentry and enjoys working in his shop.

Chris told us he has thought about population and has known about ZPG ever since high school. Like many of our members, Chris first heard about Zero Population Growth from the book *The Population Bomb*. Although he claims he wasn't a "big reader," he was serious enough about population issues to read


Paul and Anne Ehrlich's seminal book. He told us that *The Population Bomb* "made an impression on me early on," and he was taken with the arguments the authors made.

"I think you're a great organization, and you do a good job of calling attention to the fact that population growth is a fundamental driver of so many of the problems we face as a society."

He explains that his "big, social-political issue is climate change" and asserts that he's "always seen that the population question—population growth and everything else—is very strongly connected to climate change." As an educator, Chris is especially impressed by Population Connection's emphasis on education and the Population Education program, with its "good arguments to make the lives of people all over the world better."



He admires that Population Connection demonstrates that "educating the world's women and children, domestically and globally, is a good way to keep population in check." In fact, while still teaching, Chris used population examples in his dynamical systems course, where "we looked at population growth and how it's a dynamical system, even though we were more theoretical ... we looked at wolves and bears on islands and the population dynamics between predator-prey ... and we used mathematical statistics to show how populations grow and fall."

Chris sums up his support for Population Connection thusly: "I think you're a great organization, and you do a good job of calling attention to the fact that population growth is a fundamental driver of so many of the problems we face as a society." He tells us that he once "noticed my son reading *Population Connection* magazine, and he mentioned that the magazine connected population growth to climate change and a lot of other problems. He said, 'population is the root problem of so many things.' You made an impression on my son, and I'm a proud supporter of your work." 

DONATE YOUR VEHICLE

**WE MAKE IT EASY.
YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

A simple and impactful solution for an
unwanted vehicle

HOW IT WORKS

1.



Call us or
visit us online

2.



Schedule your
free pick-up

3.



Receive a tax receipt
for your donation

**Easy Process
Free Pick-Up
Tax-Deductible**

Consult your tax advisor



TO LEARN MORE CALL OR VISIT US ONLINE

855-500-7433 • careasy.org/nonprofit/population-connection

New United Nations Population Estimates and Projections

By Mary Beth Weinberger, MA

On World Population Day, July 11, 2022, the United Nations Population Division released updated population estimates and projections for the world and all countries. This article describes some of the main findings, based primarily on the summary report of *World Population Prospects 2022*.

According to the new assessment, the world's population will reach 8 billion on November 15, 2022. The number of people on the planet has more than tripled since 1950, when it was 2.5 billion. Although the annual rate of population growth has been declining since the early 1960s, the global population is projected to rise to 9.7 billion by 2050 and to continue increasing until it reaches 10.4 billion during the 2080s, according to the UN's medium projections. The population is projected to remain near that level until the end of the century.¹

There is a wide band of uncertainty around the projected numbers for dates far in the future; the UN's statistical analysis concludes that there is a 95 percent

probability that the global population will be between 9.4 and 10.0 billion in 2050 and between 8.9 and 12.4 billion in 2100 (figure 1).² There is an approximately 50 percent chance that the global population will reach a peak and begin declining during the final decades of the century. However, there is nearly as great a chance that it will continue increasing up to 2100. Which of these outcomes develops will depend heavily on the pace of fertility decline in countries that only recently began the transition from high to low levels of fertility.

The current era of sustained population growth is the outcome of a one-time demographic transition: “the historic shift towards longer lives and smaller families that has been a universal feature

of social and economic development in recent centuries” (UN 2021, preface). Figure 2 shows a schematic representation of the transition. This process began in parts of Europe during the 19th century and has since spread globally. During the transition, the decline in mortality typically begins before fertility levels start to fall, so that population growth first accelerates and later slows down once fertility levels begin declining. By 2021, all countries had begun the transition to lower levels of fertility as well as mortality. However, the timing and pace of the transition have varied greatly, and today's countries and regions show wide differences in rates of population growth and all components of population change—fertility, mortality, and migration.

¹ Unless otherwise specified, numbers given in the text are taken from the 2022 revision of the UN estimates and medium-scenario projections.

² The methodology for producing the probabilistic projections and uncertainty intervals is described in the summary report (UN 2022c) and in a detailed methodological report (UN 2022a). The medium scenario can be considered “the most likely population projection based on several thousand simulated future trends, each one based on distinct trajectories of fertility and mortality for individual countries and areas. Prediction intervals reflect the spread in the distribution of outcomes across the projected trajectories and thus provide an assessment of the uncertainty inherent in the medium scenario” (UN 2022c). The simulated trajectories are based on a model that takes into account each country's fertility and mortality trends before the start of the projection period as well as uncertainty about future trends based on the past experience of other countries when they were at similar levels of fertility and mortality. “Since these models have been calibrated using historical data on trends in fertility and mortality, an implicit assumption that underlies the medium scenario is that the pace and patterns of change in these variables will be similar in the future to what they have been in the past seventy years” (UN 2022c). Although these are not discussed here, the UN Population Division also publishes deterministic projections for various “what-if” scenarios with alternative assumptions about the future course of fertility, mortality, and migration in each country.

Diversity of trends

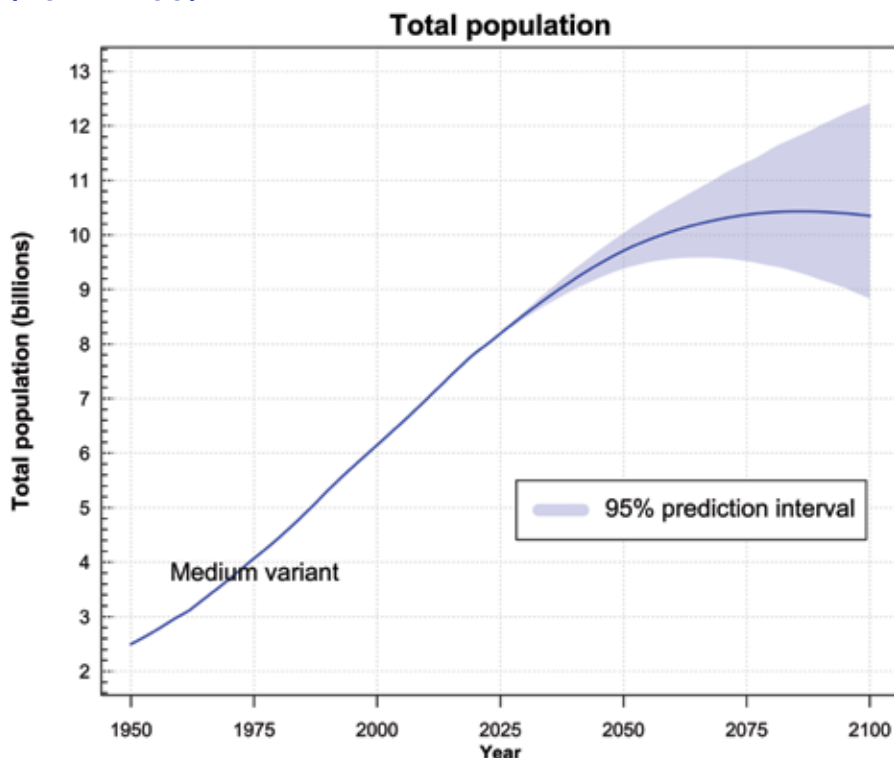
Population growth

Because of differing rates of population growth, the rank ordering of some of the largest countries and regions³ will change in the coming decades. India is expected to surpass China to become the world's largest country in 2023. China's population has essentially stopped growing at 1.4 billion, and it may fall below 1 billion by 2080. India's population growth has been slowing, but its population is projected to continue increasing until the mid-2060s, when it will reach 1.7 billion. Nigeria is projected to become the world's third largest country in 2050, when its population will surpass that of the United States.

Sub-Saharan Africa will contribute most of the global population increase between 2022 and 2100, and it is likely to become the most populous region in the late 2060s (figure 3). Its population may reach 3.4 billion by 2100, when it will account for around one-third of the global population, up from 15 per cent today. The populations of Oceania and Northern Africa and Western Asia are also expected to continue growing through the end of the century, though at a much slower pace than in sub-Saharan Africa. The populations of other regions—Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Central and Southern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Northern America—are projected

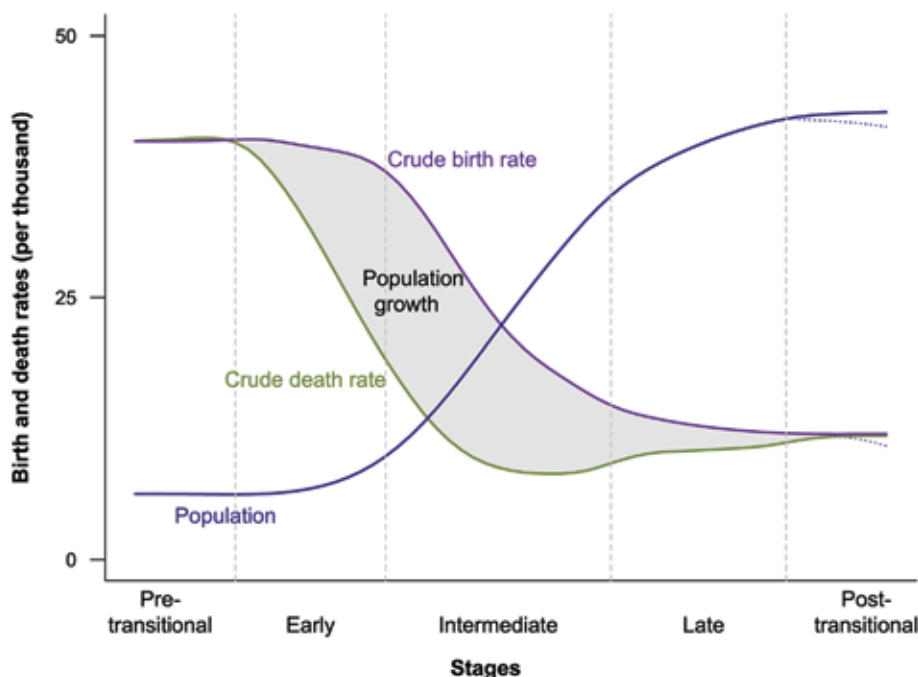
³ The regional groupings employed here are those adopted for statistical reporting of progress towards achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa and Western Asia, Central and Southern Asia, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Australia/New Zealand, Oceania (excluding Australia/New Zealand), and Europe and Northern America. See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups>.

Figure 1: Global population size: estimates (1950-2021) and medium scenario with 95 percent prediction interval (2022-2100)



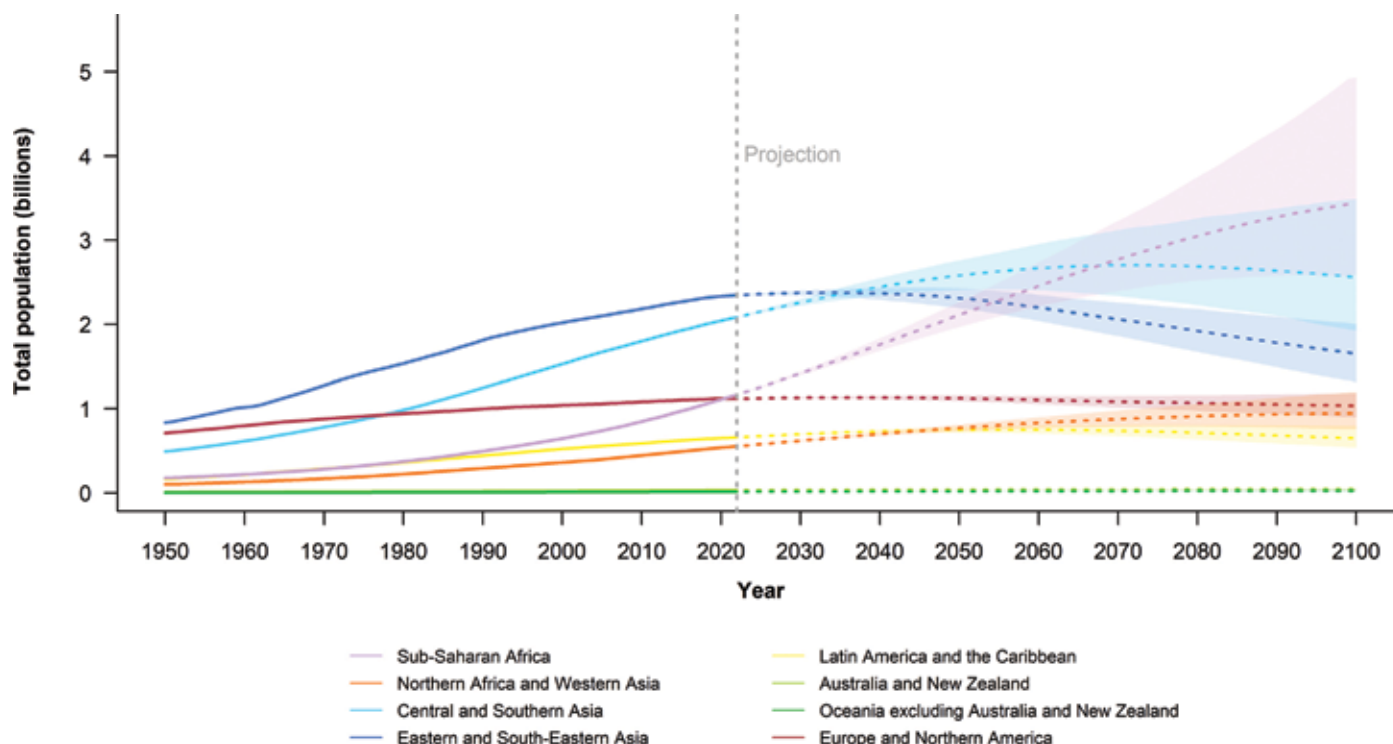
© 2022 United Nations, DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects 2022*.

Figure 2: Schematic representation of the demographic transition



© 2021 United Nations, DESA, Population Division. *Global Population Growth and Sustainable Development*.

Figure 3: Population by SDG region: estimates (1950-2021) and medium scenario with 95 percent prediction intervals (2022-2100)



Graphics above and opposite: © 2022 United Nations, DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects 2022*.

to reach their peaks and begin declining before 2100. Indeed, in a growing number of countries, the annual number of births has already fallen below the number of deaths, and the populations of 61 countries or areas are projected to decrease by at least 1 percent between 2022 and 2050, due to sustained low fertility and, in some cases, high rates of emigration.

Mortality

Global life expectancy at birth increased from 46.5 years in 1950 to 72.8 years in 2019, and it is projected to rise to 77.2 years in 2050 and 82.1 years in 2100. At the same time, the crude death rate (annual deaths per 1,000 population), will rise (figure 4), due to the

increasing share of older age groups in the population.

Although life expectancy has risen substantially in all countries since 1950, wide disparities remain. Among regions, life expectancy in 2021 ranged from 59.7 years in sub-Saharan Africa to 84.2 years in Australia/New Zealand. For individual countries and areas, it was below 54 years in the Central African Republic, Chad, Lesotho, and Nigeria, while it was above 84 years in Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Macao, and Monaco. These disparities are expected to narrow, but will not disappear during the remainder of the 21st century.

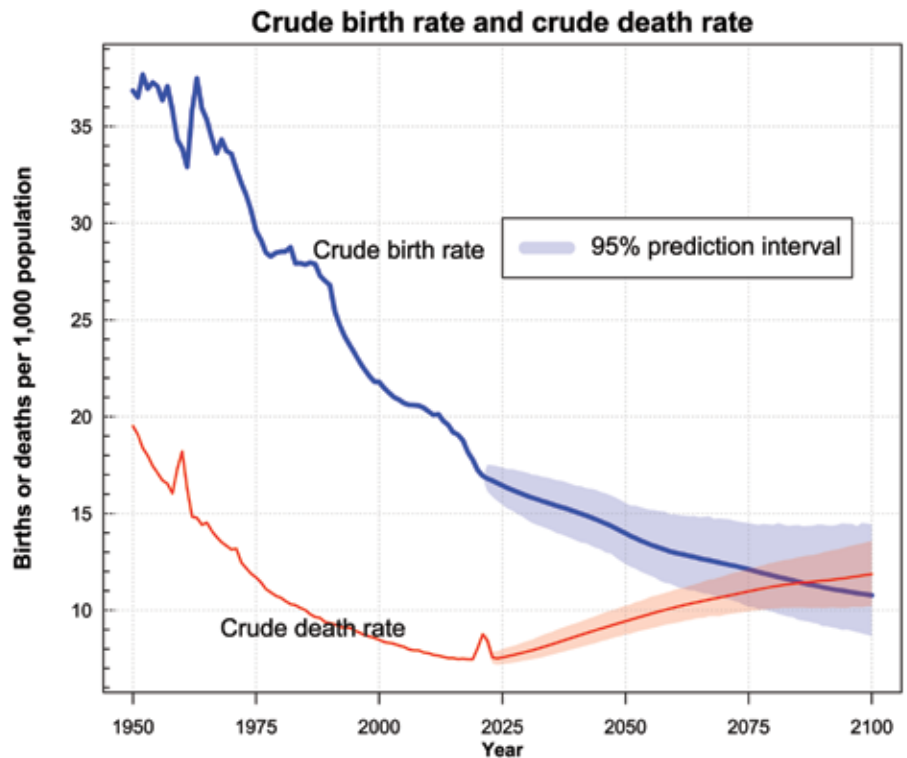
The Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder that a steady improvement in life expectancy cannot be taken for granted. In fact, recent decades have seen major setbacks in some parts of the world, including declines in life expectancy in the late 1980s and 1990s in parts of sub-Saharan Africa during the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and in Eastern Europe during the health and economic crisis that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union. Although life expectancy later resumed rising, those setbacks have had long-lasting effects on mortality levels in the countries most severely affected.

Since the pandemic began in 2020, global life expectancy at birth is estimated to have fallen from 72.8 years in

2019 to 71.0 years in 2021.⁴ Although some countries did not experience declining life expectancy during 2020–2021, in others, including Bolivia, Botswana, Lebanon, Mexico, Oman, and the Russian Federation, life expectancy decreased by four years or more. Among regions, the largest declines—over three years—occurred in Central and Southern Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean. The risk of severe illness or death from Covid-19 is especially high for older persons and, because of its larger impact on male than female mortality, the pandemic has also slightly widened the gap between male and female life expectancy; in 2021, the global average life expectancy was 73.8 years for women and 68.4 years for men. The UN projections assume that all countries will return to their pre-pandemic levels of life expectancy between 2022 and 2025 and that life expectancy will resume its upward trend. However, the estimates of Covid’s demographic impacts were, of necessity, conducted in the midst of the pandemic and based on very incomplete data. They are sure to be revised as more complete evidence of the pandemic’s impact accumulates.

The pandemic also greatly reduced levels of international migration, as many countries temporarily closed their borders. The projections assume that net international migration will resume its pre-pandemic levels and trends within a few years. Covid-19 has had smaller and less consistent effects on fertility trends; in high-income countries, there was a short-term decline in fertility as many births were postponed, but there will probably be no longer-term impact on fertility trends.

Figure 4: Global crude birth and death rates: estimates (1950–2021) and medium scenario with 95 percent prediction intervals (2022–2100)



Fertility

In 2021, the world’s average total fertility rate was 2.3 births per woman over a lifetime, less than half the level in 1950, when it was around 5 births. By 2050, total fertility is expected to decline to about 2.1 births per woman, the level at which each generation would just replace itself in a low-mortality population.

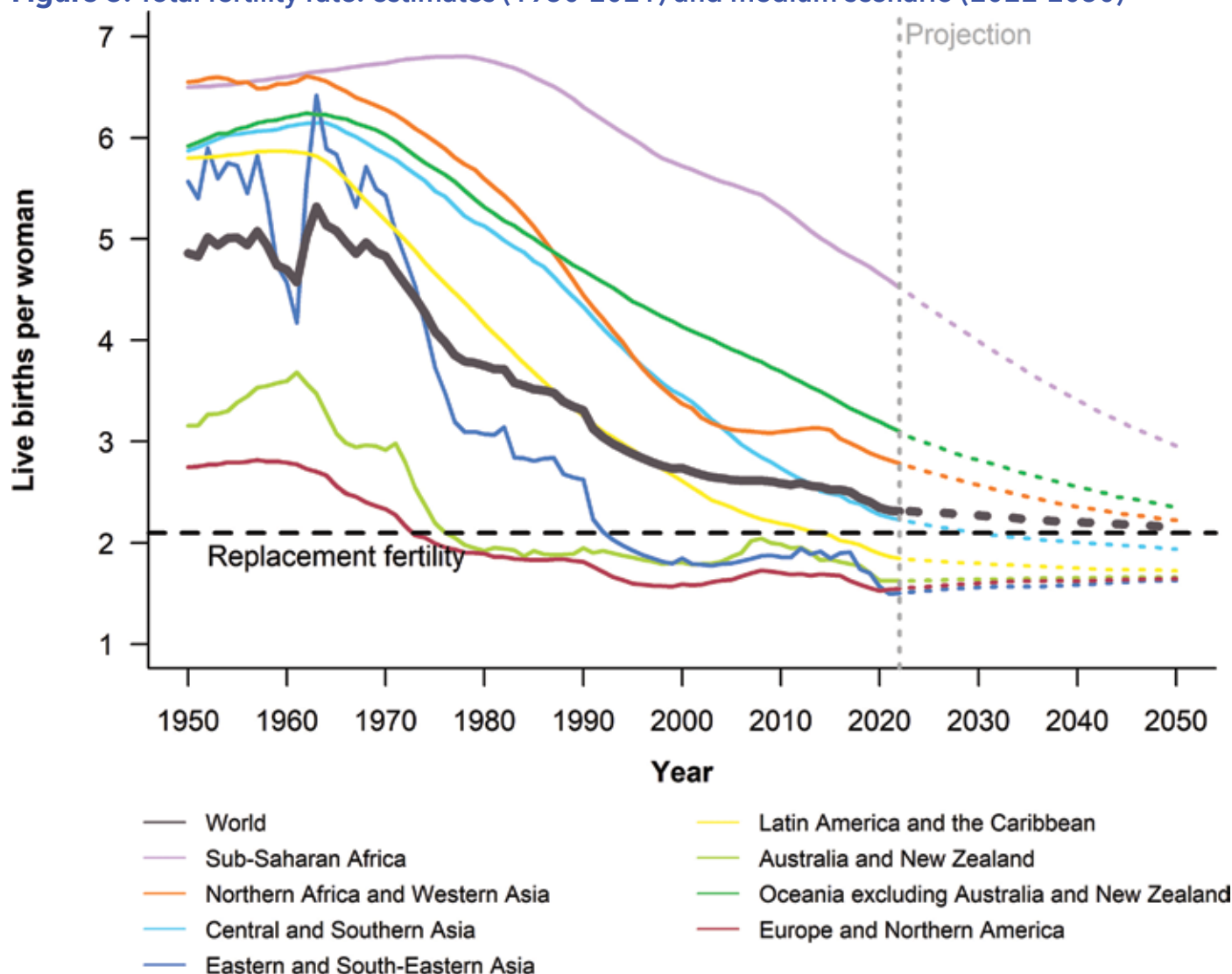
All world regions have much lower levels of fertility today than in 1950, but inter-regional differences remain large (figure 5). Total fertility is highest (4.6 births per woman) in sub-Saharan Africa and is at or above the world average in Oceania excluding Australia and

New Zealand (3.1), Northern Africa and Western Asia (2.8), and Central and Southern Asia (2.3). In other regions, containing two-thirds of the global population, total fertility fell below 2 births per woman at dates ranging from the 1970s to the 2010s. Since then, total fertility in those regions has generally fluctuated between 1.5 and 2.0 births per woman, though in some countries it has fallen even lower.

A major source of uncertainty in the long-range population projections is the difficulty of predicting the course of fertility in countries where the level of fertility is still high. Countries that

⁴ The UN Population Division collaborated with the World Health Organization to develop estimates of mortality attributable to the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. The number of excess deaths associated with the pandemic is estimated to be 14.9 million for calendar years 2020 and 2021, almost three times the number officially reported (UN, 2022c).

Figure 5: Total fertility rate: estimates (1950-2021) and medium scenario (2022-2050)



© 2022 United Nations, DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects 2022*.

still have high levels of fertility generally also have low levels of per capita income, high levels of absolute poverty and hunger, low levels of education (especially for girls), and high levels of unmet need for contraception. Most such countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, and many are in the group of 46 Least Developed Countries as classified


by the UN.⁵ An accelerated fertility decline in those countries—beyond the decline already expected in the medium projections—could bend the trajectory of future population growth closer to the lower boundary of the prediction interval shown in figure 1. Chances of this happening would be improved by stepped-up progress towards meeting

the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); history shows that a rapid fertility transition is most likely in the context of sustained progress in social and economic development, coupled with effective reproductive health and family planning programs that enable women to choose whether and when to give birth.

⁵ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category.html>

However, the last few years have pushed the world further away from achieving the SDGs. Apart from its impact on mortality and other demographic trends, the Covid-19 pandemic overwhelmed health systems and led to lengthy school closures, while the accompanying economic disruptions, now amplified by the war in Ukraine, have reversed years of

progress in eradicating poverty and hunger, in improving health and education, and in providing basic services. At the same time, the world is facing the largest number of armed conflicts since 1946, while climate change is producing more frequent and more severe heatwaves, droughts, and floods (UN 2022d). In the face of these progress reversals, António

Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, has called for “an urgent rescue effort for the SDGs” (UN 2022d, forward). The success of this rescue effort during the coming years will determine whether and how far the world progresses in achieving the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social, and environmental—for all the world’s people and for our planet. 

Differences Between the 2019 and 2022 Revisions of the UN Population Estimates and Projections

There are noteworthy differences in both methodology and results between the 1999 and 2022 revisions of the UN population estimates and projections.* For the first time, the new revision of *World Population Prospects* presents demographic estimates and projections for single calendar years and by single years of age, instead of the 5-year groupings employed earlier. “The upgrade responds to the growing demand for annual population data to assess progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” (UN 2022c). Preparation of the new revision involved an extensive reassessment of the data underlying the population estimates from 1950 through 2021, including a re-evaluation of the demographic impact of thousands of crises that have occurred over the period—conflicts and battles, mass killings, epidemics, and natural disasters. The 2022 revision also introduced new methods for taking account of uncertainty in past measurements of fertility and mortality and a revised approach to estimating the mortality impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in heavily affected countries.

New data and analyses that become available between successive revisions often lead to revised estimates for the recent past for some countries as well as revised projections for future years. According to the new revision, the world’s population as of mid-2019, which was the reference date of the 2019 revision, was 51 million (0.7 percent) larger than had been estimated in 2019, and the estimated population in mid-2021 was 34 million (0.4 percent) larger than had been projected in 2019. Among regions, the greatest absolute differences for 2021 are upward revisions for Central and Southern Asia (28 million, 1.4 percent), sub-Saharan Africa (15 million, 1.3 percent), and Northern Africa and Western Asia (11 million, 2.0 percent) and a downward revision for Eastern and Southeastern Asia (18 million, -0.8 percent) (UN 2022b).

The 2022 and 2019 revisions both project that the global population in 2050 will be around 9.7 billion, while the medium projection for 2100 is about 5 percent lower in the latest than in the previous revision (10.4 billion and 10.9 billion, respectively). However, both those numbers fall well within the 95 percent uncertainty interval for the projections.

*The methodological changes are described in an annex to the summary report on the 2022 revision and in a detailed technical report (United Nations 2022a and 2022c).

Mary Beth Weinberger, MA, worked for over 25 years as a demographer in the United Nations Population Division and was Chief of the Population and Development Section when she retired. Mary Beth has been a member of the Population Connection Board of Directors since 2019.

References

UN, 2021: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2021). *Global Population Growth and Sustainable Development*. UN DESA/POP/2021/TR/NO. 2.

UN, 2022a: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). *World Population Prospects 2022: Methodology of the United Nations population estimates and projections* (UN DESA/POP/2022/TR/NO. 4).

UN, 2022b: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). *World Population Prospect [sic] 2022: release note about major differences in total population estimates for mid-2021 between 2019 and 2022 revisions*

UN, 2022c: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). *World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results*. UN DESA/POP/2022/TR/NO. 3.

UN, 2022d: United Nations. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022*



INDIA

Projected to Become WORLD'S MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY Next Year



How one organization, Population Foundation India, is reacting to the news and working toward a healthier, more equitable future for all Indians

By Hannah Evans, Senior Analyst

On November 15, the world is projected to reach the astounding population milestone of 8 billion, according to the 2022 revision of the United Nations Population Division's *World Population Prospects*.

Another major conclusion from the report is that India is set to surpass China as the world's most populous country in 2023. India is currently home to more than 1.4 billion people, and its population isn't expected to peak for another 40

years—topping out at 1.7 billion in the early 2060s—while China's population is expected to start shrinking next year.

Fertility and population growth rates have declined substantially in most Indian states in recent decades, and in 2021, the country achieved below-replacement-level fertility for the first time. These impressive gains are thanks to poverty alleviation, urbanization, and better, more widespread access to health care and education—especially for girls. Yet, India's

large share of young people will continue to drive population growth for several generations, putting additional pressure on the region's natural resources and on the government's ability to meet the public health and other infrastructure needs of its people. And because fertility rates remain highest in the lowest-income settings, population growth rates in India's poorest states are disproportionately higher than those of affluent states and of the national average.

Population and Environment

India, along with most other industrializing nations, is in a precarious catch-22 position wherein the development required to improve living standards results in the overuse of available resources and higher levels of climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions—which most egregiously affect people living in those same industrializing countries. Unless changes are made to the way food and energy are produced, India's development will continue to contribute to the environmental dangers Indian people face, such as air and water pollution, land degradation, depletion of freshwater resources, and mounting disasters due to climate change. All of India's 1.4 billion inhabitants already live in areas where air quality is below World Health Organization (WHO) standards, and the number of heavily polluted cities is increasing. In 2022, India reported

India is currently home to more than 1.4 billion people, and its population isn't expected to peak for another 40 years...

a total of 132 cities with pollution levels higher than the national standard, up from 102 in 2019. Over the past few years alone, extreme flooding and heatwaves have ravaged the country and affected tens of millions of people. The state of Kerala's record-breaking floods in 2018 and 2019, for example, were prompted by a combination of warmer temperatures causing stronger monsoons and more rapid glacial melt in the Himalayas, and by landslides due to mining and construction. The floods caused 483 deaths and affected over 5.4 million people. Kerala's new airport—which was built on a floodplain—was temporarily shut down as a result.



Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committee meeting in Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh **Opposite:** Women's group in Rajasthan



Population Foundation India hosting an exhibit at the 2019 Jaipur Literature Festival

Population and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

During the 1960s and 70s, alarm over warnings that population growth would outrun food supply resulted in the implementation of various state-sanctioned population control policies, which materialized most notoriously in China and India. Between 1976 and 1977, India forcibly sterilized millions of people,

mostly poor men. The campaign ranged in severity from incentives such as transistor radios to the horrors of physically dragging people to sterilization camps.

Widespread opposition to these brutal human rights abuses eventually led to a shift away from government-led population control and towards the promotion of reproductive health and rights, especially following the 1994 UN



Youth champions mobilizing clients for vaccination

International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. However, the legacy of target-driven, sterilization-based family planning was never fully abandoned. A 2012 Human Rights Watch study found that some Indian state governments were still applying quotas for contraceptive use, including female sterilization, and population control policies disqualifying families with more than two children from obtaining government jobs or from receiving benefits from various government schemes is currently in effect in a few states.

Development as a Contraceptive

The best and most effective longterm way to reduce fertility and slow population growth is by expanding access to health care, education, and economic opportunity; investing in girls' education; and ensuring family planning information and services are available to all who desire and need them. Currently, India's total fertility rate (TFR) is 2.0 births per woman, with most states having reached replacement rate (2.1) or below, and the demand for and use of modern contraception is only continuing to increase.

Currently, India's total fertility rate (TFR) is 2.0 births per woman, with most states having reached replacement rate (2.1) or below, and the demand for and use of modern contraception is only continuing to increase.

Throughout India, fertility rates and desired family size vary according to people's education and income levels. According to the most recent National Family Health Survey statistics for 2019–2021, the total wanted fertility rate (the TFR that would result if all unwanted births were prevented) is 1.6. The survey concludes that desired family size declines with rising levels of education—women with 12 or more years of schooling report wanting an average of 1.8 children, while the ideal number of children reported by women with no schooling is 2.6. Additionally, the gap between actual and wanted fertility is higher among women

with no schooling (0.6) than it is among women with 12 or more years of schooling (0.2).

Only five Indian states still have fertility rates above replacement level, including four of the poorest. India has taken action to improve people's sexual and reproductive health by expanding the contraceptive method mix offered under the National Family Planning Program, securing a more stable supply of family planning commodities and SRHR services, and introducing an initiative focused on improving the health of adolescents. Still, rates of unmet need for modern contraception and unintended pregnancies remain high—around 49 million Indian women have an unmet need for contraception, and 45 percent of pregnancies are unintended each year.

Population Foundation India

One organization stands out as an agent for positive change: Population Foundation India (PFI) works to address India's population, health, and development issues through gender-sensitive and rights-based initiatives in sexual and reproductive health and women's empowerment. Founded in 1970, PFI is a leader



Adolescent group in Rajasthan

in policy work, community-led development, and initiatives focused on social and behavioral change. For over 50 years, PFI has produced research, advocated for progressive SRHR policies, and supported the government in improving health outcomes for millions of people across the country through its national and state-specific programs. PFI works with India's state and national governments and with other NGOs on the provision of family planning services, adolescent reproductive and sexual health, community action for health, the scaling up of successful pilot programs, and social and behavioral change communication.

PFI works throughout India from its headquarters in New Delhi and has a direct presence in Rajasthan, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh—three low-income states in the northern part of the country. More recently, PFI's direct presence has expanded to the states of Manipur and Jharkhand. “We look at populations that are underserved, and how do we really make a dent there where the challenges are the most. What kind of strategies, what kind of local capacities do we have,” says Bijit Roy, Senior Lead of Programs.

Both Bihar and Uttar Pradesh rank in the top three of India's 28 states for poverty and fertility, with fertility rates of 3.0 and 2.35 children per woman, respectively. In Bihar, India's poorest state, around 34 percent of the population was living below the international poverty line of

\$1.90 in 2012 (the most recent state-level data). Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, had a poverty rate of 29 percent in 2012. In Rajasthan, the fertility rate is a bit lower, at 2.0, and the poverty rate (in 2012) was lower as well, at 15 percent.



Youth leader Anu Kumari (right) in Nawada, Bihar



Adolescent group in Rajasthan

“The essence of our work focuses on advancing gender-sensitive policy, ensuring adequate implementation of reproductive health programs, and promoting community accountability.”

**—Sanghamitra Singh, PhD,
Lead of Policy and Programs
at PFI**

PFI’s Rights-Based Approach

“The essence of our work focuses on advancing gender-sensitive policy, ensuring adequate implementation of reproductive health programs, and promoting community accountability,” explains Sanghamitra Singh, PhD, Lead of Policy and Programs at PFI.

PFI’s work with Indian policymakers, influencers, and media representatives includes helping them recognize violence against women and girls as a public health concern. Another major initiative is teen pregnancy prevention—PFI, along with over 200 thought leaders and influencers, supported a campaign by the Government of Rajasthan aimed

at reducing the country’s highest rates of adolescent pregnancy. And in Uttar Pradesh, PFI established sexual health youth centers at 40 colleges.

PFI produces critical analyses of policies and programs related to population and family planning—through publications and media engagement, PFI confronts coercive population control proposals with evidence-based alternatives grounded in human rights. Government incentives to discourage couples from having more than two children—including conditional access to government jobs, subsidies, and promotions—explicitly target low-income, marginalized populations.

State-led initiatives aimed at population control run contrary to the government's stated commitment to slowing population growth through rights-based development and the expansion of education, women's empowerment, and gender equality. Bijit Roy explains, "We have done a lot with the media and political leadership across party platforms ... a lot with the chief secretaries who work along with the chief ministers ... giving them credible evidence and facts about how negative the implications of coercive policies can be. We are also beginning work on sensitizing the negative aspects of coercion on family planning and population issues. So it's a very uphill task that one organization can take on." Despite PFI's impressive efforts, since the 1990s, 12 Indian states have introduced two-child policies, and in 2021 alone, two-child proposals were introduced in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Assam.

Bringing the Public Into Public Health

PFI's Community Action for Health (CAH) approach empowers community members and community-based health committees to ensure the adequacy and accountability of local health care systems. For example, CAH's Strengthening Reproductive Health and Family Planning Services initiative brings state and district health officials into rural, hard-to-reach communities throughout the Darbhanga and Nawada districts of Bihar to increase awareness and use of family planning methods.

The program also uses PFI's interactive voice system, an automated, responsive telephone line that allows patients to give confidential feedback on the quality and availability of services they've received. The voice system is used by local and state officials to resolve issues and grievances that might otherwise not have been



Youth leader Aarti Kumari (far right) with other girls

Statement by Population Foundation India (PFI) on India Becoming the Most Populous Country in 2023

The UN's earlier forecasts and the new figures don't differ significantly. According to the previous *World Population Prospects* study, India was slated to surpass China in population by 2027. Therefore, we were aware that India will surpass China in a short period of time.

However, we must have a much broader perspective when looking at the demographic story. India's annual population growth rate was 2.3 percent in 1972, but it is currently less than 1 percent. Over this time, the average number of children an Indian woman has in her lifetime has decreased from around 5.4 to under 2.0. The replacement fertility rate, at which a population precisely replaces itself from one generation to the next, has thus been reached. According to the most recent National Family Health Survey statistics, modern contraception use is increasing across the nation, and the desired fertility rate for all communities in India is less than 2.

India should now think about its people rather than just numbers. The unmet need for contraception among Indian women is 9.4 percent, which translates to 22 million women who desire to put off or delay having children but lack access to a method of contraception.*

Giving women from all backgrounds access to family planning services should be our first priority. We should also take advantage of the fact that a third of our population is under the age of 24. To fully utilize the so-called "demographic dividend," the government must take a leading role in investing in young people's economic opportunity, health, and education.

*These figures do not include women who are using traditional methods of family planning, which is why these numbers differ from the ones that appear on page 21—those figures, from the Guttmacher Institute, consider women who are using traditional methods to have an unmet need for contraception.

Women at a MKBKSH concert in Alwar, many holding posters of Dr. Sneha



reported, which has led to more stable supplies of family planning commodities and antenatal care services, especially in remote project sites.

Social and Behavioral Change Communication

All PFI programs aim to dismantle harmful social norms and biases influencing people's understanding of and willingness to use reproductive health services. Sanghamitra Singh says, "Another big umbrella that is a cross-cutting avenue of our work is to understand and address the various factors outside of the health system that have an impact on health outcomes for women and for young people and other vulnerable populations, also called social determinants of health," adding, "These could be social norms, societal factors, patriarchy, and women's status in society."

PFI uses entertainment education to positively influence behavior change via television and radio, digital and social media, and community-based outreach. PFI's flagship initiative, Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon (MKBKSH), translated as, "I, a Woman, Can Achieve Anything," is a widely popular television and radio drama series that ran for 183 episodes over three seasons and has been translated into 14 languages and broadcasted across 200 community radio stations as well as social media channels. The empowering series depicts a young woman who becomes a medical doctor and returns to her village to help improve the health and rights of women. The series tactfully explores sensitive topics like family planning, early marriage, gender equality, contraceptive use, and domestic violence in ways that entertain while subtly and sensitively challenging unjust social and cultural norms. "It's a 360-degree approach," says Sanghamitra Singh.



Minal Vaishnav (Dr. Sneha), center, with youth leaders




“We also created an artificially intelligent chat bot (SnehAI Chat Bot), which uses the on-screen persona of the lead character, Dr. Sneha, to ask questions about sexual and reproductive health and create a comfortable environment for questions.” SnehAI uses a “colloquial mix of Hindi and English” and operates on Facebook Messenger to engage youth with videos, quizzes, and stories intended for first generation digital media users.

Since its inception in 2013, MKBKSH has reached hundreds of millions of viewers, receiving celebrity endorsements from Bollywood stars like Sharmila Tagore and Farhan Akhtar.

The series tactfully explores sensitive topics like family planning, early marriage, gender equality, contraceptive use, and domestic violence in ways that entertain while subtly and sensitively challenging unjust social and cultural norms.

Conclusion

India currently has a favorable age structure for experiencing a “demographic dividend,” with a growing proportion of working-age adults relative to a shrinking proportion of younger dependents. This could set India up for rapid economic growth and improvements in living standards for many of the country’s poorest people. The extent of the improvements, however, will depend on India’s commitment to gender equality and the equitable provision of rights-based social programs, including access to high quality family planning education and services. Fortunately, there’s at least one organization working every day to turn India’s best case scenario into reality. 

Learn more about PFI at populationfoundation.in



U.S. Supreme Court Strips Abortion Rights, and Congress Begins 2023 Appropriations Process

By Brian Dixon, Senior Vice President for Governmental and Political Affairs

Abortion Rights Threatened Across the United States

On June 24, the Supreme Court, by a 6–3 decision, stripped Americans of the constitutional right to abortion. This was the first time in American history that the Court acted to take existing rights away from people.

The consequences were immediate. Abortion appointments were canceled in states across the country. In one egregious example, a 10-year-old rape victim had to travel from Ohio to Indiana for a safe abortion. Extremist state legislators and governors promised swift action to ban abortion and even the right to travel to another state in order to terminate a pregnancy.

It also spurred a flurry of activity by the Biden administration, Democrats in Congress, and progressive state legislators to push for laws protecting access to abortion care. President Biden has signed two executive orders since the decision to mobilize the federal government to do whatever it can—which is limited, given some federal laws—to protect the right to abortion, including enforcing existing anti-discrimination laws to protect access to medication, directing

the Department of Justice to protect the freedom to travel between states for the purposes of reproductive health care, and identifying ways to help states where abortion remains legal to cover the costs of people coming to their states for care. The Department of Justice also filed a lawsuit to block Idaho's strict abortion ban on the basis that it is contrary to federal law that requires hospitals that receive Medicare funding to provide emergency care to anyone who needs it, including abortion in certain instances.

The U.S. House also passed a series of bills to protect access to care. The Women's Health Protection Act would create a federal right to legal abortion under statute and would prevent states from imposing onerous and unnecessary restrictions on abortion care. The Ensuring Women's Right to Reproductive Freedom Act would guarantee the right to travel between states for abortion care. The Right to Contraception Act would create a federal statutory right to obtain and use contraceptives and a corresponding right of health care workers to provide those contraceptives, and it would prevent states from interfering with anyone's access to birth control.

The Women's Health Protection Act failed twice in the Senate this year, and the other two bills have yet to come before that body where they face long odds.

House Begins 2023 Appropriations Debate

On July 1, the House Appropriations Committee approved the Fiscal Year 2023 State Department and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. Like last year, this legislation calls for huge strides forward in international family planning support.

The bill provides a total of \$830 million for international family planning efforts, with \$70 million of that directed to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). While still short of the more than \$1 billion needed from the U.S. to get contraceptives to everyone who needs them, it is \$220 million more than the current investment. The bill also includes the Global HER Act provision to prevent a future president from unilaterally imposing the Global Gag Rule, and it strips out the Helms Amendment that has prevented U.S. aid from being used to make safe abortion available in countries where it is legal.

During the Committee debate, two amendments to undermine the family planning provisions were defeated. The first, offered by Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA), would have eliminated the Global HER Act provision, reinserted the Helms Amendment, struck language requiring that information on contraceptives be medically accurate, and inserted language designed to block support to UNFPA. It was defeated on a vote of 23-32. The second amendment, offered by Rep. Julia Letlow (R-LA), would have prohibited funding to UNFPA and eliminated all funding for bilateral family planning. It failed 24-32.

On July 5, the House Appropriations Committee approved the 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill that contains \$500 million for the Title X (ten) domestic family planning program. That's an increase of \$213 million over the current level. The bill also lifts the discriminatory Hyde Amendment that has blocked access to safe abortion for lower income Americans for decades. Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK) proposed an amendment to the legislation to add a host of abortion restrictions back into the bill. It was defeated by a vote of 26-31.

2023 Senate Appropriations Proposals Surprisingly Generous

In late July, Senate Appropriations leaders released their draft Appropriations bills. The State Department and Foreign Operations bill calls for increases in funding for international family planning and includes the Global HER Act provision. The Senate bill, which has not been brought up in Committee yet, provides a total of \$710 million for family planning, an increase of just over \$100 million from the current level, with \$60 million of that directed to UNFPA.


The Senate version of the Labor, HHS, and Education bill makes crucial new investments in family planning and reproductive health as well. It calls for funding Title X at \$512 million and also eliminates the Hyde Amendment. The Senate bill also calls for \$130 million for a new Reproductive Health Access Fund to help women who live in states that have banned abortion get care in states where it remains legal.

The appropriations process is likely to remain uncompleted until after the mid-term elections in November.

Kansans Reject Effort to Strip Abortion Rights From State Constitution

On August 2, voters in Kansas overwhelmingly rejected a proposed amendment to the state Constitution that sought to eliminate the right to abortion. The amendment, drafted by opponents of abortion in a confusing manner, was placed on the primary election ballot because supporters thought conservative turnout would dwarf other voters. Also, in the days leading up to the election, voters across Kansas were sent text messages urging them to vote “yes” to defend choice—when a yes vote was in favor of the amendment.

The confusing wording, the timing, and the misinformation failed. The amendment failed in a landslide, with 59 percent of voters rejecting it. Importantly, the effort also seems to have been responsible for driving up voter turnout. The total votes on the amendment were 20 percent higher than the combined total of votes in the two party primaries occurring simultaneously.

The result in Kansas confirms that abortion rights are strongly supported by voters everywhere in the country. 



Roe Reversal: Domestic Threat and Global Betrayal

By Melvine Ouyo, Population Connection Board Member

The United States Supreme Court decimation of domestic reproductive rights through the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* is part of an all-out assault on reproductive freedoms everywhere around the world.

Women and girls across the globe will suffer as these attacks continue. Right now, they're still recovering from the impacts of the Global Gag Rule, a deadly U.S. policy that wreaked havoc on communities around the world when in place during the nightmarish reign of Donald Trump.

In my homeland of Kenya, communities suffered numerous harmful impacts of the Global Gag Rule, including increased maternal death, increased unsafe abortions, funding losses that led to clinic closures, termination of programs, and health service disruptions. Similarly, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* is triggering devastating impacts including inaccessibility to reproductive health services and safe abortion services.

The reversal of *Roe* in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* will lead to a high number of teenage and unplanned births and increased maternal mortality and morbidity rates. Additionally, the U.S. Supreme Court decision threatens

to silence and stigmatize foreign health care providers from talking about sexual and reproductive health service integration including abortion care. It will only add to the stress and confusion experienced by overseas abortion providers who depend heavily on family planning aid from the U.S.

Moreover, this decision will negatively influence foreign sexual and reproductive health and rights policy development and implementation and lead to even stricter policies, especially in more conservative countries. For instance, the Ministry of Health in Kenya secretly launched the Reproductive Health Policy 2022-2032, a document that did not address critical issues like teenage pregnancies, assisted reproduction, and high maternal mortality resulting from unsafe abortions; the policy instead validates dangerous and deceitful crisis pregnancy centers. It excludes any and all interventions to deal with unsafe abortions and provides no health interventions for women who wish to terminate unwanted pregnancies, even under the limitations outlined by the Kenyan Constitution.

Because of the U.S. Supreme Court decision, in Kenya, we are already witnessing incitement among anti-women groups, including CitizenGO (an

ultraconservative organization headquartered in Spain and working in over 50 countries), which has renewed its opposition narrative against sexual and reproductive health and rights, including abortion, and plans to disrupt democratic processes across Africa. For example, in advance of Kenya's August 9, 2022, elections, CitizenGO organized to disrupt the election by poisoning the public dialogue surrounding the female candidates with an anti-women narrative.

The Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* can only be described as a betrayal of women and girls' freedom—particularly of Black women and other women of color—and is a threat to many other civil rights.

Compounding Challenges

This new threat to sexual and reproductive rights comes on the heels of women and girls across the globe struggling to bounce back from the impacts of Covid-19, as well as the impacts of other recent catastrophes like civic upheaval and climate crisis challenges—including flooding, cyclones, and other extreme weather conditions.

Leshan Kereto, Founder and Director at Tareto Africa, recounted similar challenges faced by Maasai women and girls




Melvine Ouyó is the Founder and Executive Director of Hope for Kenya Slum Adolescents Initiative. Before receiving her master's degree in public administration from the Harvard Kennedy School, she was the Kibera Clinic Director at Family Health Options Kenya. She has been a Population Connection Board Member since June 2021.

including sexual and gender-based violence and early and forced marriages, which he says have been exacerbated by the impacts of Covid-19 and prolonged drought in Maasai land.

Even though individuals, authorities, and governments, including the European Union Parliament, have condemned the U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, the future of reproductive freedom is at stake given the vast influence of U.S. foreign policy and the American

history of imposing draconian reproductive health policy on countries overseas.

President Biden is right when he says that the U.S. is in a state of public health emergency. Congress must take swift action to make *Roe v. Wade* the law of the land, to permanently repeal the Global Gag Rule, and to do everything in its power to protect the fundamental right to bodily autonomy for people in the United States and around the globe. 

“The Supreme Court’s overturning of *Roe v. Wade* can only be described as a betrayal of women and girls’ freedom—particularly of Black women and other women of color—and is a threat to many other civil rights.”



New PopEd Trainers Inducted at Summer Leadership Institute

By Pamela Wasserman, Senior Vice President for Education

There's nothing like getting out from behind Zoom and interacting with teachers in person. Having had to postpone our Summer Leadership Institute in 2020 and 2021, it was a welcome change to bring a group of educators together with our staff for a weekend of training, networking, and sharing experiences.

From July 15-17, PopEd hosted 26 educators (K-12, university, and informal) from across the U.S. and Canada at the Warren Conference Center and Inn in Ashland, Massachusetts. The lakefront site, 25 miles from Boston, has a retreat-like atmosphere, perfect for our collaborative weekend.

This year's participants traveled from 19 states and two provinces. Some had been involved with PopEd as workshop hosts or alumni of our graduate course for secondary teachers. Others were new to the program but intrigued by PopEd's curriculum and teaching strategies. All were eager to learn how they could get more involved in representing the program in their local regions for veteran and future teachers.

Most of our time together was spent modeling over 20 of our most-used workshop activities for elementary and secondary grades. Activity sessions were grouped by three broad categories: understanding population concepts, people and the environment, and the global family—with interdisciplinary lessons for science, social studies, mathematics, and language


It was really energizing to spend the two days in conversation with people who were all passionate about the issues we tackled. And what a wealth of experience in the group! We also laughed a lot of the time, even while grappling with some serious concerns.

—Peter Thomas, *Middle School Teacher, Ohio*

I really enjoyed attending the institute! I learned so much and am anxious to rethink and revise my courses for the coming semester. Looking forward to staying connected to all of the great people I met and supporting Population Education by sharing what I have learned.

—Rebekah Baker, *Associate Professor of Education, Indiana*

arts. Our sessions also featured an examination of the United Nations' latest population projections and a demonstration of some of PopEd's new interactive, digital tools to enhance both in-person and virtual workshops.

The weekend culminated with a practicum in developing agendas for PopEd teacher workshops that attendees hope to present during the upcoming school year. Our team looks forward to working with this enthusiastic group of new trainers. 



2022 PopEd Leadership Institute staff and participants



Denise Stewardson (UT) and Rebekah Baker (IN) examine demographic data before constructing population pyramids



Group creates a “future wheel,” mapping out cause-and-effect connections of population growth

Announcing the Launch of Our World of 8 Billion Contest

With a new global population milestone upon us, we have rebranded our popular student video contest from World of 7 Billion to ... World of 8 Billion. Since the first contest was launched on the cusp of the 7 billion mark, during the 2010-2011 school year, over 34,000 students have submitted entries.

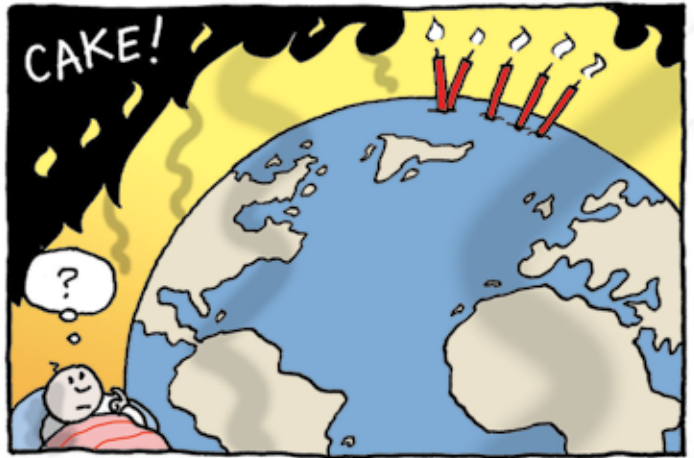
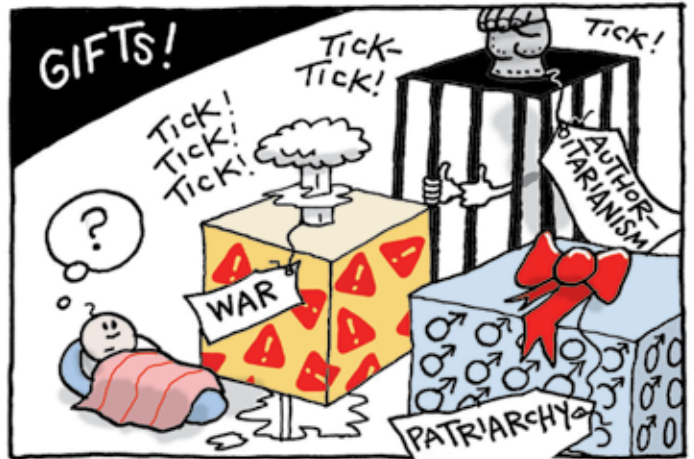
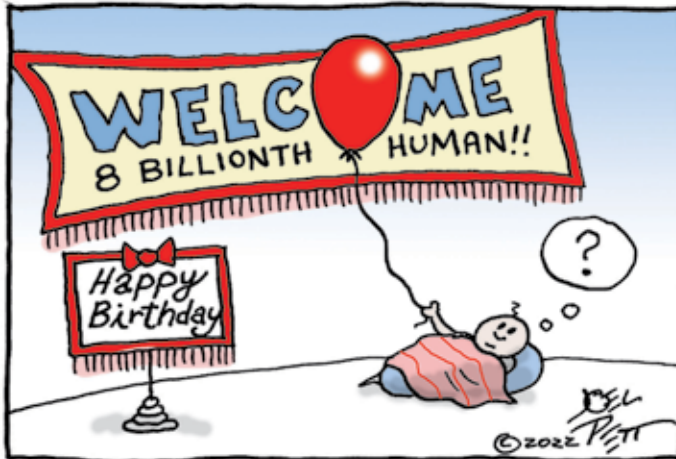
Visit our new site, Worldof8Billion.org, to see the details for the 2022-2023 contest including:

- background readings on this year’s topics: climate change, solid waste, and gender equality
- a new project organizer to help students plan their winning submissions
- judging rubric, helpful tips, and more!

Submission deadline: February 22, 2023



CARTOON



Copyright Joel Pett. All rights reserved.

The New York Times

... For the first time in history, the Supreme Court has eliminated an established constitutional right involving the most fundamental of human concerns: the dignity and autonomy to decide what happens to your body. ...

The implications of this reversal will be devastating, throwing America into a new era of struggle over abortion laws—an era that will be marked by chaos, confusion, and human suffering. About half the states in the United States are expected to enact laws that restrict or make abortion illegal in all or most cases. Many women may be forced by law to carry pregnancies to term, even, in some cases, those caused by rape or incest. Some will likely die, especially those with pregnancy complications that must be treated with abortion or those who resort to unsafe means of abortion because they can't afford to travel to states where the procedure remains legal. Even those who are able to travel to other states could face the risk of criminal prosecution. Some could go to prison, as could the doctors who care for them. Miscarriages could be investigated as murders, which has already happened in several states, and may become only more common. Without full control over their bodies, women will lose their ability to function as equal members of American society. ...

By the majority's reasoning, the right to terminate a pregnancy is not "deeply rooted" in the history and tradition of the United States—a country whose Constitution was written by a small band of wealthy white men, many of whom owned slaves and most, if not all, of whom considered women to be second-class citizens without any say in politics.

... the majority on this Supreme Court has demonstrated its disregard for precedent, public opinion, and the Court's own legitimacy in the eyes of the American people. We will be paying the price for decades to come.

— June 24, 2022

The Washington Post

In a reckless fit of judicial activism that will redound for generations, the Supreme Court on Friday overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the half-century-old precedent that declared that Americans have a constitutional right to obtain abortions. It is hard to exaggerate how wrongheaded, radical, and dangerous this ruling is, and not just for anyone who could ever become pregnant. ...

In part because Americans rely on Supreme Court rulings to make decisions and plan for the future, overturning a precedent of *Roe's* vintage and significance should be done only in exceptional circumstances—meaning, if the decision was egregiously wrong. This was obviously not the case with *Roe*, which the Court had previously reviewed and upheld and which found its basis in the simple concept that a government committed to respecting fundamental liberties must place a high premium on individuals' prerogative to make the most intimate and personal choices. Nor was *Roe* outside the mainstream of American values, with polls showing broad popular acceptance of the ruling before the justices eviscerated it. ...

The Court's audacious attack on abortion rights raises questions about the future of other legal guarantees, including same-sex marriage, access to contraception, and even interracial marriage. These guarantees are based on concepts of individual rights of the sort the Court majority has now disregarded. ...

The last victim is the Court itself. In a stroke, a heedless majority has done more to undermine the Court's credibility than in any other action it has taken in modern times. Fundamental to its place in American society is the notion that the justices are more than just politicians in robes—that they are committed to conscientiously interpreting the law, with regard to text, tradition, history, logic, judicial restraint, and common practice, rather than imposing their political or ideological preferences as quickly and as far as they can. In much of the country, this image will now be shattered. So, too, will be Americans' expectations that they can count on any Court ruling to remain the durable law of the land. We are entering a new era of distrust and volatility in the legal system in a country that needs stability in its governmental institutions, rather than more venom and tumult. ...

— June 24, 2022

YOUR GIFT ... A SUSTAINABLE WORLD OUR PROMISE ... PAYMENTS FOR LIFE



Contact us to find out how a Population Connection Charitable Gift Annuity can foster a more sustainable, less-crowded world while providing lifetime payments back to you!



Photo: Lisa J. Shannon



Contact our Development Team!

(877) 319-9880
giving@popconnect.org